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Media Contact: Allison Rogers, Allison.Rogers@doa.ri.gov, 401-222-2280

RhodeMap RI

RI Division of Planning

One Capitol Hill

3rd Floor

Providence, RI 02908

401.222.6183

www.rhodemapri.org

RhodeMap RI Tours the State to Get Feedback on Its Progress

Providence, R.I. – Governor Lincoln D. Chafee today invited members of the public to attend six interactive **RhodeMap RI** open house events in May to contribute to ideas for growing Rhode Island's economy and providing for healthy homes, neighborhoods and communities.

The open houses will be staffed and sponsored by the Rhode Island Department of Administration's Division of Planning as part of the **RhodeMap RI** initiative. **RhodeMap RI** is a coordinated and forward-looking approach to the State's efforts to make Rhode Island a better place to work and live. New Housing and Economic Development Plans are being developed as part of the **RhodeMap RI initiative** and a sustainable action plan will identify top priorities from these plans that integrate transportation, land use and environment.

"I encourage all Rhode Islanders to attend these upcoming **RhodeMap RI** open houses," Governor Chafee said. "It is important for our Division of Planning staff to hear from a diversity of voices as they develop the State's new Housing and Economic Development plans. Each voice will be heard and together we can help map out how our state should move forward."

"Our Division of Planning team has been very impressed with the range of ideas they have heard from our Rhode Island citizens over the last eight months," stated Director of Administration Richard Licht. "These ideas have already helped Planning's comprehensive economic development and housing planning efforts, and our team looks forward to hearing even more feedback in May."

"Through interactive media, participants at the May **RhodeMap RI** open houses will be able to learn about and provide feedback on proposed goals, policies and strategies for building a better future for Rhode Island," added Kevin Flynn, Associate Director for the Division of Planning.

The upcoming **RhodeMap RI** open house events are the culmination of an extensive outreach and research effort. Since August 2013, hundreds of Rhode Island citizens have participated and shared their ideas through 23 regional workshops, over 30 focus groups and meetings, as well as online. **RhodeMap RI** has connected with a wide array of groups and individuals, particularly reaching out to those who are traditionally under-represented in statewide planning initiatives. The **RhodeMap RI** team has incorporated the feedback received to identify, map and evaluate the intersections of the state's environmental, economic, and social resources, with the vision of helping communities determine where and how future development should happen within their borders. In addition, **RhodeMap RI** has collaborated with Commerce RI and the Rhode Island Foundation on their *Make It Happen* initiative, in which more than 200 members of the business community provided input to inform the new Economic Development Plan.

Registration for the upcoming May events is not required. Members of the public are encouraged to drop in at any time during these “open house” style events. For those interested in hearing from Division of Planning staff, three ten-minute presentations will provide a brief overview and summary of **RhodeMap RI** at the top of each hour (5:00 PM, 6:00 PM, and 7:00 PM for evening events, and 9:00 AM, 10:00 AM, and 11:00 AM for the morning event.) For those unable to attend or who want to spend more time with the information, survey tools are available on **RhodeMap RI**’s website (www.rhodemapri.org) from May 5 to 23, 2014.

RhodeMap RI May open house locations include:

Monday, May 5th 5 – 8 pm The Southside Cultural Center 393 Broad Street Providence, RI	Thursday, May 8th 5 – 8 pm St. Lucy’s Parish Center 909 West Main Road Middletown, RI
Saturday, May 10th 9am – 12 pm Navigant Credit Union 693 Broad Street Central Falls, RI	Monday, May 12th 5 – 8 pm Warwick Library 600 Sandy Lane Warwick, RI
Tuesday, May 13th 5 – 8 pm Wickford Middle School 250 Tower Hill Road North Kingstown, RI	Wednesday, May 14th Woonsocket, RI Location, TO BE CONFIRMED

Childcare will be provided on-site. Spanish interpreters will be available.

Deaf/Hearing Impaired assistance is available. Please contact Krista Moravec at 401-272-1717 or kmoravec@horsleywitten.com at least two weeks in advance.

For more information, contact Jeff Davis, AICP, Principal Planner at Jeff.Davis@doa.ri.gov or 401-222-4718 or Siobhan O’Kane, Principal Planner at Siobhan.OKane@doa.ri.gov or 401-222-2177 at the Rhode Island Division of Planning

About **RhodeMap RI**:

RhodeMap RI is one component of Governor Chafee's broader efforts to bring a coordinated and forward-looking approach to the State's efforts to make Rhode Island a better place to work and live. Prior to Governor Chafee taking office, the State did not have a truly coordinated plan for economic development, housing, transportation, and land use. To achieve this level of integration, the focus issues of the project will be broad, including investment in education, sound infrastructure, and workforce development and training. Support for local communities and making the state and local tax bases strong will be a high priority for **RhodeMap RI**. And we recognize that our success will require building on our economic assets to foster the growth of business at every scale.

RhodeMap RI will build upon the work already completed by the Chafee Administration. Rhode Island released the initial results of the project in February when it issued the *Economy Rhode Island* and *An Equity Profile of Rhode Island* reports, which analyze Rhode Island's demographics, business climate, and economic competitiveness. These reports can be viewed by visiting the **RhodeMap RI** website at www.rhodemapri.org. The Department of Administration's Division of Planning expects to complete the planning process, which will include extensive public engagement, in 2014. The final year of the initiative will focus on implementation planning and capacity building for Rhode Island municipalities, state agencies, and community partners. **RhodeMap RI** is funded with a Sustainable Communities Initiative Grant and Rhode Island is the only state in the nation that received this grant.

About the **Sustainable Communities Initiative Grant**:

The grant is one of several offered through the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a collaboration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program supports metropolitan and multi-jurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of: (1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; (2) social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; (3) energy use and climate change; and (4) public health and environmental impact. The Sustainable Communities Program is coordinated by HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, whose mission is to create strong, sustainable communities by connecting housing to jobs, fostering local innovation, and helping to build a clean energy economy. Rhode Island will develop the comprehensive, integrated plan through an inclusive public process with an eye towards positive and equitable impacts for all Rhode Islanders. The grant consortium is composed of state agencies, business leaders, residents, municipal leaders and non-profit organizations.

Online: <http://rhodemapri.org>

Twitter: [@RhodeMapRI](https://twitter.com/RhodeMapRI)

Department or Agency: Department of Administration's Division of Planning

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